NOAA's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
Project Charter
(August 16, 2005)

1.0 Definition

A UAS incorporates an Unmanned Aircraft (UA), as well as a Ground Control Station (GCS) and the Line-of-Sight (LOS) or Over-the-Horizon (OTH) communication link needed to operate the aircraft.

2.0 Purpose

This charter establishes the NOAA UAS Steering Committee and Working Group as formal bodies to serve as NOAA's focal point for collaboration and information regarding the application of UAS technology in the accomplishment of NOAA missions.

3.0 Mission

The mission of the Steering Committee and Working Group is to make recommendations to NOAA's Line Offices (LO), Goal Teams, and Programs on the application of UAS technology to fulfill critical research and operational gaps.

4.0 Roles

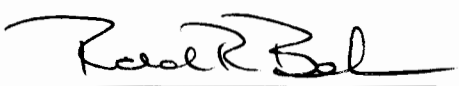
Steering Committee – A Steering Committee (SC) shall be established and be composed of one individual nominated from each NOAA LO and Goal Team. The primary role of the SC is to ensure the working group is proceeding in the proper direction. The SC will also facilitate communication between the working group and senior leadership. SC Co-Chairs shall be appointed. These Co-Chairs shall initially be from NMAO (permanent) and OAR. Steering Committee meetings shall be held as needed, however, semi-annually at a minimum.

Working Group – The Working Group (WG) shall be established and composed of one individual nominated from each NOAA LO and Goal Team. Members will initially include those who have some expertise in UAS capabilities and operations. The WG members shall serve as the primary points-of-contact between NOAA goal leads and program managers and the SC. The WG members shall have the primary responsibility for developing products deemed necessary by the SC. (This includes those products in Section 4.0 of this document). A WG Chair (from NMAO) and Deputy will be established. Working Group meetings shall be held monthly, at a minimum.

Observers – Since the Department of Defense (DoD) is currently the primary user of this emerging technology, a U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy observer shall be appointed to the WG to aid in NOAA's possible transition to this technology. Observers may also be requested from other government agencies (i.e. NASA), organizations, or educational institutions that have a close partnership with NOAA and therefore have a stake in NOAA's use of UAS technology.

5.0 Responsibilities

- Monitor, analyze, and document evolving NOAA mission requirements and capabilities and determine if UAS's can fulfill critical gaps in observing systems
- Facilitate NOAA's efforts to identify new areas to effectively apply UAS technology
- Ensure adequate consideration (which includes future funding) is given to UASs within NOAA's PPBES process
- Assist Program Managers in compliance with NOAA's Policy on Transition of Research to Application, if this new technology is incorporated into developing observational projects
- Coordinate with appropriate NOAA Councils on the advancement of UASs within NOAA
- Coordinate future NOAA UAS demonstrations and/or projects and thoroughly document lessons learned
- Continue to build relationships with other government agencies
- Explore UAS-related opportunities within government, DoD, public, private, and academic sectors - both nationally and internationally
- Continue to maintain contact with private industry (UAS manufacturers and instrument development companies) in order to stay informed of UAS industry developments
- Continue to work with RTCA Special Committee 203 and Access 5 in an effort to gain routine, same day, "file & fly" UAS access to the National Airspace System (NAS)
- Develop a NOAA UAS "Roadmap"
- Make recommendations to NOAA on whether to own, lease, or rent a UAS. This includes the development of a Cost and Operational Effectiveness Analysis (COEA) in conjunction with NASA
- Thoroughly evaluate UAS safety concerns, including Operational Risk Management (ORM) studies
- Serve as a resource to connect potential users, particularly NOAA Goal Teams and Program Managers, with UAS capabilities and tools
- Conduct outreach, including informational or conceptual presentations, to educate potential users within NOAA on UAS capabilities
- Be a source of operational and technical expertise to assist users in the deployment of UAS technology within NOAA (if applicable)



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